

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 17 with the following amended paragraph:

Patent Document 26: Unexamined Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open Specification No. Hei 11-92429 ~~and~~ (corresponding European Patent No. ~~40166448~~ 1016648 B1)

Please amend paragraph [0018] beginning at page 16, line 13 with the following amended paragraph:

[0018] 1, 101, 201, 301: continuous multi-stage distillation column
2, 102, 202, 302: top of the continuous multi-stage distillation column
3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 15', 16, 18, 19, 21, 105, 113, 115, 115', 116, 118, 119, 121, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 132, 205, ~~224~~, 225, 227, 228, 229, 230, 232, 233, 235, 305, 313, 325, 327, 328, 329, 330, 332, 333, 335, 229B, 229C: conduit
4: preheater
6, 106, 206, 306: bottom of the continuous multi-stage distillation column
8: evaporator
11, ~~[[127]]~~ 126, 226, 234, 326, 334: condenser
14, 114: evaporator
17, 117, 231, 331: reboiler
229A: nozzle

Please amend paragraph [0083] beginning at page 48, line 18 with the following amended paragraph:

[0083] As specific examples of the method for separating the aromatic carbonate ether (b) in the case where an aromatic carbonate is produced from dimethyl carbonate (DMC) as the dialkyl carbonate and phenol (PhOH) as the aromatic monohydroxy compound using two multi-stage

distillation columns (first and second multi-stage distillation columns) which are connected in series, wherein the synthesis of methyl phenyl carbonate (MPC) is performed in the first multi-stage distillation column and the synthesis of diphenyl carbonate (DPC) is performed in the second multi-stage distillation column, there can be mentioned:

method (i) in which, since the aromatic carbonate ether (b) has a boiling point close to that of DMC, a part of DMC (containing the aromatic carbonate ether (b)), which is formed in the DPC synthesis (in which DPC and DMC are produced by the disproportionation of MPC) and is recycled to the [[MPC]] DPC synthesis, is withdrawn from the system,

method (ii) in which the DMC which is recycled as mentioned above to the [[MPC]] DPC synthesis is purified by distillation to thereby remove the aromatic carbonate ether (b) from the DMC prior to the recycling thereof to the [[MPC]] DPC synthesis, and

method (iii) in which fresh DMC as the starting material used in the MPC synthesis is purified by distillation to thereby remove $\text{CH}_3\text{OCH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OCOOCH}_3$ (an aromatic carbonate ether precursor of formula (8)) from the fresh DMC.